Civic Engagement: Changing the Paradigm

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AMERICA*SPEAKS*

What would it take to improve dialogue and democracy in your personal life, your community, and your nation?

Focus of Session

- Challenge of Citizen Participation
- Principles for Success
- Example of America*Speaks* work in Health Care and Our Budget, Our Economy
- Round up of the Citizen Engagement Process

We will “open up government decision-making and involve the public in the work of agencies, not simply soliciting opinions, but by **tapping into the vast and distributed expertise of the American citizenry to help government make more informed decisions**.”

“We must expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each other more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy, and remind ourselves of the ways our hopes and dreams are bound together”

Challenge for Public Leaders

- What is your implicit contract with the voters and public?
- What is your current paradigm?
- How does it need to change?

Spectrum: From Input to Empowerment

- **Inform**: Provide objective information to understand the problem
- **Consult:** Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions
- **Engage:** Work directly to ensure that public concerns are consistently considered
- **Collaborate:** Partner with the public in each aspect of decision
- **Empower:** Place authority in the hands of citizens

Changing the Paradigm of Citizen Participation

- How can turn citizen participation into a trusted tool to inform policy?
- How can we change distrust of public officials and disengagement to participation and engagement?

Crisis of Representation

- Who is not being heard? How do they get representation?
- Special interests, pundits, dominate positions and often set policy agenda.
- Growth of blogs is public reaction to exclusion in governance and need for new voices
- Participation is not evenly spread across population.

Promising Opportunities

- Untapped common ground that crosses traditional divides – the power of dialogue.
- New powerful technologies and large scale methodologies.
- Envision and create institution that can embody new modes of governance.

When to Involve the Public?

- Complex issue with difficult trade offs
- Perceived need by the public and government
- Behavior change, as well as policy change, is required
- Issue has been dominated by special interests
- When a full-range of perspectives is needed

When Not to Involve the Public?

- Policy issue that does not have traction with public.
- Decision has already been made
- High level of urgency without adequate time to convene
- Insufficient resources – staff, money
- For feedback on a service when a survey will work just as well

Changing the Paradigm

- Create a stronger public constituency and mandate for change
- Educate the electorate about the challenges facing government officials
- Involve the public in being part of the solution and taking action
- Gain unique insight and new options

Citizen Engagement Approaches

- **Small group approaches (6 -100 persons)**

  -- citizen jury, community forums, study circles, design charettes

- **Large-scale approaches (100 – 10,000)**

  --21st Century town meeting, web forums, deliberative polling, public conversations

On-Line Approaches

- Virtual Summits
- Idea Crowdsourcing
- Collaborative Writing
- Networked House Parties
- Blogs
- Choicebooks
- Policy and Budget Simulations
- Social Networking
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Text Messaging

21st Century Town Meetings

5 Principles of Success for America*Speaks*

#1 Diverse Representation
Table Discussion
Even Tables: Education & Health Services
Odd Tables: Other Public Services
What are your Reactions to the Options?
– Likes, Dislikes, or Concerns
What Additional Options Should be Considered?
unop
The Unified New Orleans Plan
85
108

Outreach and Diversity

1,000 people sit at diverse round tables supported by trained facilitators.

Participants are recruited to match the demographic diversity of the region

#2 Informed Participation

Informed Dialogue

CITIZEN SUMMIT III:

REAL CHALLENGES, REAL CHOICES

Mayor Anthony A. Williams

Dear Citizen,

Four years ago, 2,000 residents of the District of Columbia came together at the first Citizen Summit to launch an exciting and innovative process called Neighborhood Action. At the Summit, citizens helped set the District's priorities for the city budget and strategic plan. Two years later, another 2,500 residents joined me at Citizen Summit II to revisit the city's priorities. We have achieved much in the past few years, but we still have a long way to go before reaching our full potential as a city.

I'm thrilled to invite residents to join me again this year for Citizen Summit III in our new Washington Convention Center. Citizen Summit III is an opportunity for the public to address the real challenges that face the District of Columbia and make real choices about the future of our city.

Together, we will look to the future and envision the kind of place we want our city to be. We will also discuss the difficult trade-offs that confront us today as we work to improve our educational system, increase the safety of our neighborhoods, and expand opportunity for all.

The Citizen Summit is America's largest ongoing town hall meeting – a time when our community can come together to talk about the most important issues that impact our lives.

Our goal at the Summit is to conduct a conversation between the District government and residents about our plans for the coming years. The Summit provides a chance for you to make your voice heard in the important decisions that shape the future of our city.

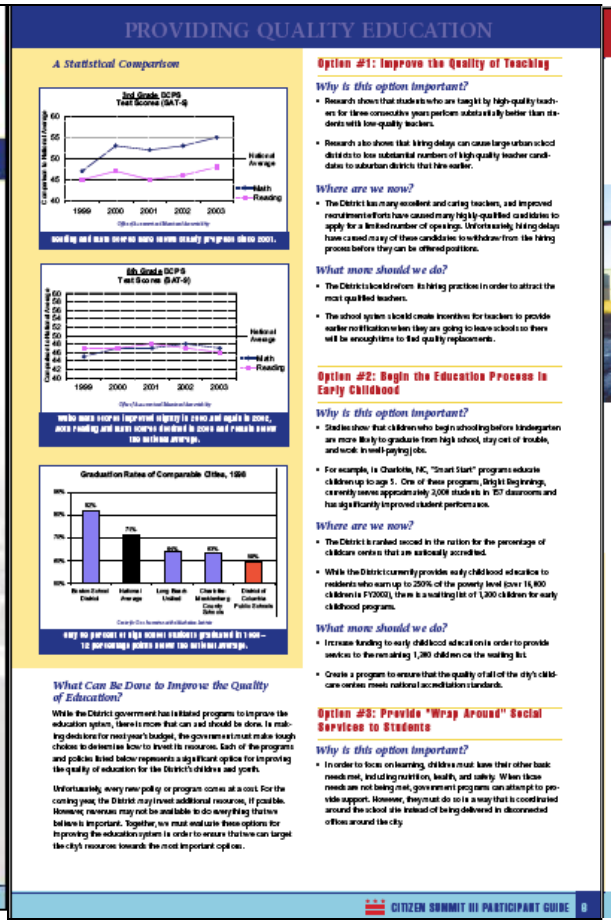
I also want to acknowledge the critical leadership that is provided by the Council of the District of Columbia and our 37 Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. They are critical partners in moving our city forward, and their input today will become a central part of our large efforts to improve the city.

I look forward to your participation at the Summit. Together, we will shape a bright future for the District of Columbia.

Anthony A. Williams

Mayor, District of Columbia

WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER NOVEMBER 1, 2003 WWW.NEIGHBORHOODACTION.DC.GOV



PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION

A Statistical Comparison

3rd Grade DCPS Test Scores (SAT-9)

reading and math scores have shown steady progress since 2001.

8th Grade DCPS Test Scores (SAT-9)

while math scores improved slightly in 2003 and again in 2004, both reading and math scores declined in 2004 and remain below the national average.

Graduation Rates of Comparable Cities, 1998

only 58 percent of high school students graduated in 1998 – 12 percentage points below the national average.

What Can Be Done to Improve the Quality of Education?

While the District government has initiated programs to improve the education system, there is more that can and should be done. In making decisions for next year's budget, the government must make tough choices to determine how to invest its resources. Each of the programs and policies listed below represents a significant option for improving the quality of education for the District's children and youth.

Unfortunately, every new policy or program comes at a cost. For the coming year, the District may invest additional resources, if possible. However, revenues may not be available to do everything that we believe is important. Together, we must evaluate these options for improving the education system in order to ensure that we can target the city's resources towards the most important options.

Option #1: Improve the Quality of Teaching

Why is this option important?

- Research shows that students who are taught by high-quality teachers for three consecutive years perform substantially better than students with low-quality teachers.
- Research also shows that hiring delays can cause large urban school districts to lose substantial numbers of high quality teacher candidates to suburban districts that hire earlier.

Where are we now?

- The District has many excellent and caring teachers, and improved recruitment efforts have caused many highly-qualified candidates to apply for a limited number of openings. Unfortunately, hiring delays have caused many of these candidates to withdraw from the hiring process before they can be offered positions.

What more should we do?

- The District should reform its hiring practices in order to attract the most qualified teachers.
- The school system should create incentives for teachers to provide earlier notification when they are going to leave schools so there will be enough time to find quality replacements.

Option #2: Begin the Education Process in Early Childhood

Why is this option important?

- Studies show that children who begin schooling before kindergarten are more likely to graduate from high school, stay out of trouble, and work in well-paying jobs.
- For example, in Charlotte, NC, "Smart Start" programs educate children up to age 5. One of these programs, Bright Beginnings, currently serves approximately 2,000 students in 157 classrooms and has significantly improved student performance.

Where are we now?

- The District is ranked second in the nation for the percentage of childcare centers that are nationally accredited.
- While the District currently provides early childhood education to residents who earn up to 250% of the poverty level (over 16,900 children in FY2003), there is a waiting list of 1,300 children for early childhood programs.

What more should we do?

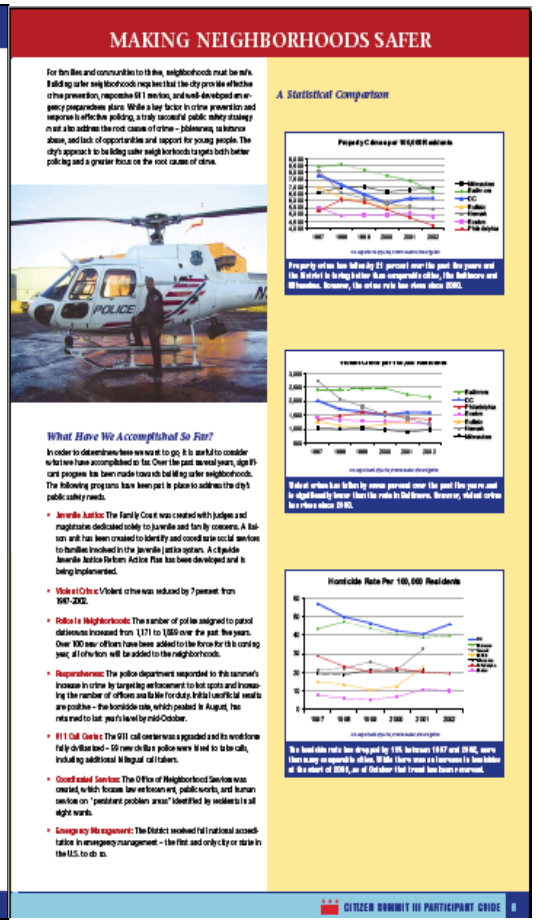
- Increase funding to early childhood education in order to provide services to the remaining 1,300 children on the waiting list.
- Create a program to ensure that the quality of all of the city's childcare centers meets national accreditation standards.

Option #3: Provide "Wrap Around" Social Services to Students

Why is this option important?

- In order to focus on learning, children must have their other basic needs met, including nutrition, health, and safety. When these needs are not being met, government programs can attempt to provide support. However, they must do so in a way that is coordinated around the school site instead of being delivered in disconnected offices around the city.

CITIZEN SUMMIT III PARTICIPANT GUIDE 8



MAKING NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

For families and communities to thrive, neighborhoods must be safe. Building safer neighborhoods requires that the city provide effective crime prevention, responsive 911 services, and well-developed emergency preparedness plans. While a key factor in crime prevention and response is effective policing, a truly successful public safety strategy must also address the root causes of crime – joblessness, substance abuse, and lack of opportunities and support for young people. The city's approach to building safer neighborhoods targets both better policing and a greater focus on the root causes of crime.

What Have We Accomplished So Far?

In order to determine how we want to go, it is useful to consider what we have accomplished so far. Over the past several years, significant progress has been made towards building safer neighborhoods. The following programs have been put in place to address the city's public safety needs.

- **Juvenile Justice:** The Family Court was created with judges and magistrates dedicated solely to juvenile and family concerns. A liaison unit has been created to identify and coordinate social services to families involved in the juvenile justice system. A citywide Juvenile Justice Reform Action Plan has been developed and is being implemented.
- **Violent Crime:** Violent crime was reduced by 7 percent from 1997-2002.
- **Police Neighborhoods:** The number of police assigned to patrol districts was increased from 1,171 to 1,359 over the past five years. Over 100 new officers have been added to the force for this coming year, all of whom will be added to the neighborhoods.
- **Reapportionment:** The police department responded to this summer's increase in crime by targeting enforcement to hot spots and increasing the number of officers available for duty. Initial unofficial results are positive – the homicide rate, which peaked in August, has returned to last year's level by mid-October.
- **911 Call Center:** The 911 call center was upgraded and its workforce fully civilianized – 59 new civilian police were hired to take calls, including additional Bilingual call takers.
- **Coordinated Services:** The Office of Neighborhood Services was created, which focuses law enforcement, public works, and human services on "persistent problem areas" identified by residents in all eight wards.
- **Emergency Management:** The District received full national accreditation in emergency management – the first and only city or state in the U.S. to do so.

A Statistical Comparison

CITIZEN SUMMIT III PARTICIPANT GUIDE 9

#3 Facilitated Deliberation

#4 Identifying Shared Priorities

The Technology

GroupWare

Polling keypads

#5 Link to Decision Making

Designing Powerful Projects

- Clearly understand the objectives
- Frame clear open-ended questions that provide for excellent dialogue
- Develop a design outline with key questions and timing
- Create a content committee with experts

Designing Powerful Projects

- Refine questions for dialogue and key polling attributes
- Pilot test content and questions to determine timing and workability
- Refine overall design into production script
- Conduct complete run through of all slides and presentations

Example of California Health Care Reform

- Foundation Funded
- Supported by Governor and Legislative Leadership

californiaspeaks

Working Together for Better Health Care

A Statewide Conversation…

Convened 3,500 Californians simultaneously across eight cities on August 11, 2007

…to Send a Message to State Leaders

Legislature reconvened to consider several health care reform proposals (among other things) before close of legislative year

Satellite Linkage

Unique Outreach Strategy

Random Recruitment:

- 120,000 people contacted
- 300,000 letters sent
- +2,000,000 calls made

Targeted Recruitment:

Staff in 8 cities extended targeted invitations to hard-to-reach groups

State Leadership

Focus of Discussions

What Changes Need to be in Place for You to Support Each Proposed Reform?

- Employer mandate
- Expansion of government programs
- Guaranteed issue
- Cap on insurer admin. costs & profits
- Individual mandate
- Single-payer system
- Cost Containment measures

A Mandate for Reform

- 86% of participants said it was essential or important to pass health care reform this year.
- 84% of participants said they were very-to-somewhat willing to share in the responsibility of paying for health care reform.

Evaluation of Outcomes

- Impact on Individuals

  Researchers by Team from Harvard and Berkeley

- Impact on Policies

  Research by Harbage Consulting

- Impact on Policy Makers

  Research by Harder & Company Community Research

Impact on Individuals

- Participants were far more likely to engage in a range of political acts on the health care issue.
- Most participants became slightly more trusting of government & in the belief they could influence policy.
- Most shifted their opinions but not in a uniform direction.

Impact on Policy

- Reviewed legislative proposals from before event and after event. Did reforms move closer to or farther away from 28 public priorities?
- Legislative reforms moved closer to public priorities on three fourths of issues of proposals in mainstream debate

Impact on Policymakers

- Surveys of 30 decision makers about California*Speaks*
- Policy makers said the process added a sense of urgency and momentum to passing reforms at a time when attention had shifted away from health care because of budget conflict

AMERICA SPEAKS
Our Budget, Our Economy

Finding Common Ground on Our Fiscal Future

Diverse Group of 3,500 Americans Across 57 Sites Weigh In on Nation's Fiscal Challenges

Peter G. Peterson Foundation
Our America. Our Future.

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

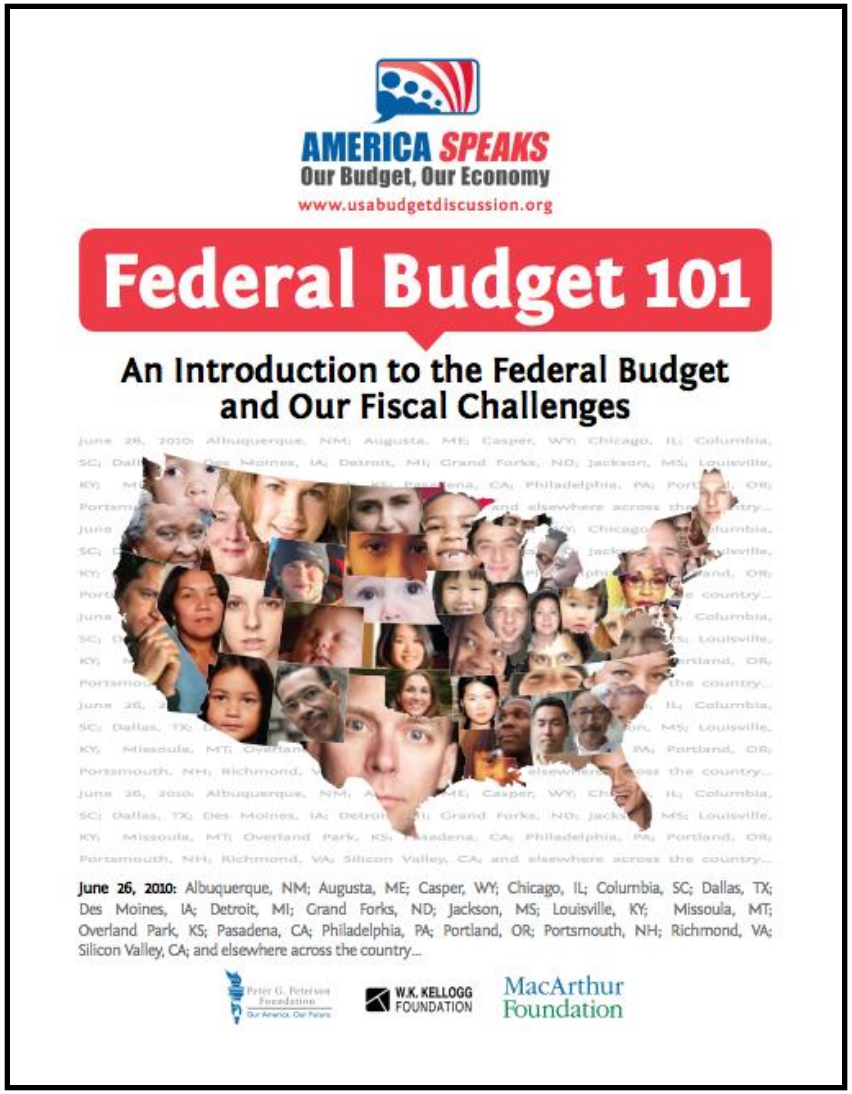
MacArthur Foundation

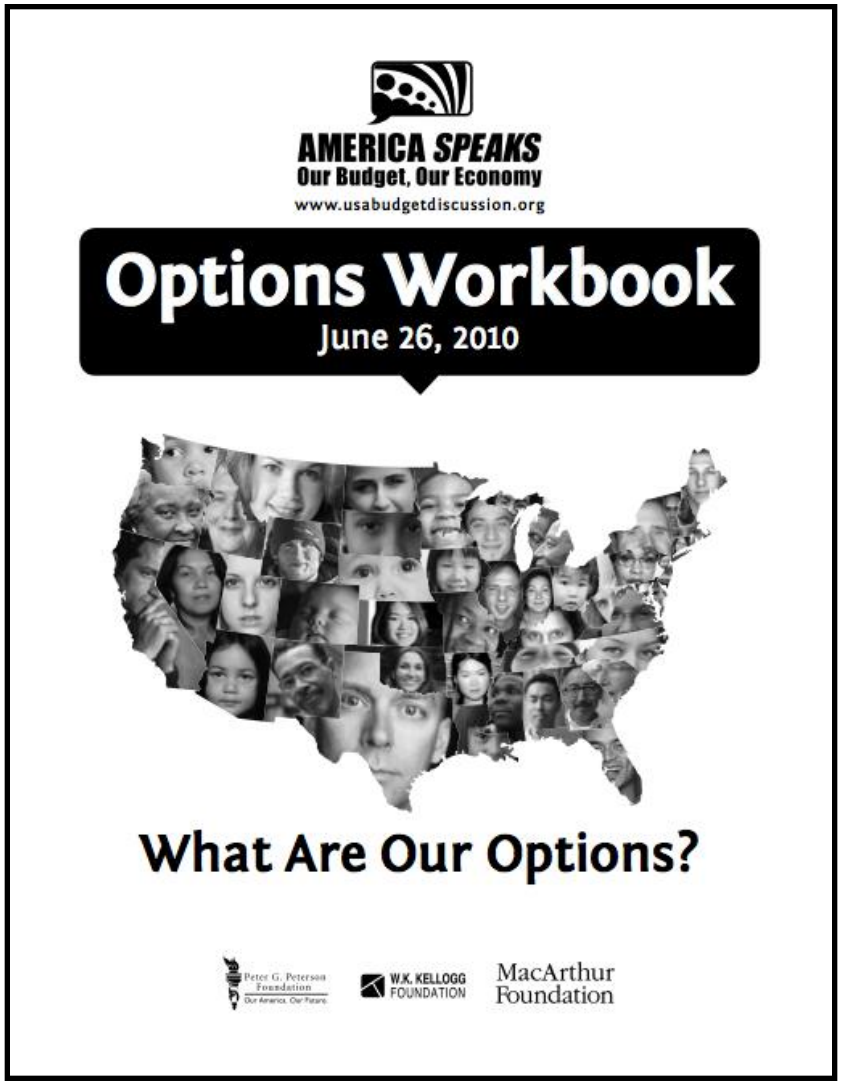
19 Town Meeting Sites

Albuquerque
Augusta
Casper
Chicago
Columbia
Dallas
Des Moines
Detroit
Grand Forks
Jackson
Los Angeles County
Louisville
Missoula
Overland Park
Philadelphia
Portland
Portsmouth
Richmond
Silicon Valley

3,500 People Across 57 Sites

38 Additional Community Conversations Across the Country - Three Online Conversations in Second Life





Participants received two guides that provided an overview of the issues and reviewed the pros and cons of 42 spending and revenue options. Experts were also available on site to answer questions that came up during the discussions.

7 Hour Agenda

- **Hopes and Ground Rules for Civil Discussion**
- **Economic Recovery**
- **Shared Values**
- **Making Tough Choices: Parts 1, 2 and 3**
- **Individual Voting on Tough Choices**
- **Messages to Our Leaders**
- **Taking Action**

AMERICA SPEAKS
Our Budget, Our Economy

Table Introductions & Discussion Guidelines

Instructions:
Capture each participants response to the first question. Enter group responses to the second question. Click "Submit" after each response.
Please send your responses one at a time.

Please share your greatest hope for the future of the country that your children, grand children and future generations will inherit.

What additional ground rules will ensure we have a productive discussion where everyone is heard?

Submit

Values Table Task

- ***What are the core values that should guide our decisions about our country's fiscal future?***

- **Where do we have agreements?**

- **What are some of our differences?**

Values Scale

1 ◄ 2 ◄ 3 ◄ 4 ► 5 ► 6 ► 7

Share the burden of reducing the deficit equally

Place a greater burden for reducing the deficit on those that are more capable

Reflecting on Tough Choices

- **Where is your table relative to the $1.2 trillion in 2025?**
- **What do the choices your table is making say about our values?**
- **Given your discussion about core values, what adjustments do you want to make in the options we have chosen for deficit reduction?**

Spending Preferences

- **Reduce Defense Spending:** 85% of participants expressed support to reduce defense spending by at least 5% or more.
- **Reduce Non-Defense Spending:** 68% of participants supported reductions by at least 5%.
- **Reduce Health Care Spending:** 62% of participants supported reductions by at least 5%.
- **Don’t reduce Social Security:** No options for reducing Social Security benefits received a majority of support.

Revenue Preferences

- **Raise Taxes on Wealthy:** 54% of participants wanted to raising income taxes on those earning more than $1 million by five percent; 52% of participants expressed support for raising personal tax rates for the top two income brackets by at least 10%.
- **Carbon and Securities Tax:** 54% of participants expressed support for establishing a carbon tax and 50% of participants supported the establishment of a securities-transaction tax.
- **Reform the Tax Code**: Participants were divided about options presented to reform the tax code.

Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline

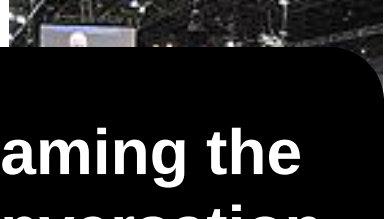
Educating + Building Awareness

Continuous

Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline



Framing the Conversation

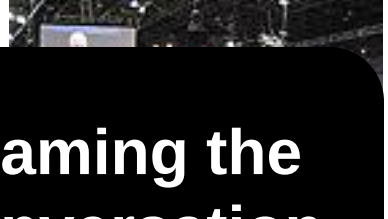
Educating + Building Awareness

Continuous

Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline



Framing the Conversation

Dialogue + Deliberation

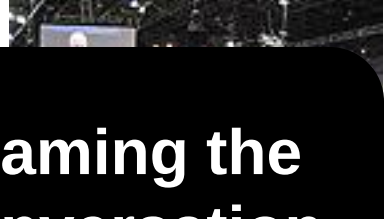
Educating + Building Awareness

Continuous

Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline



Framing the Conversation

Dialogue + Deliberation

Refining Shared Priorities

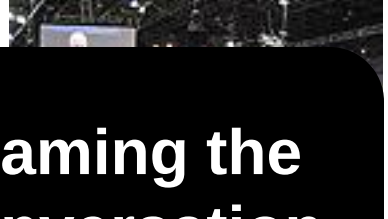
Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline

Educating + Building Awareness

Continuous



Framing the Conversation

Dialogue + Deliberation

Refining Shared Priorities

Sustaining Participation

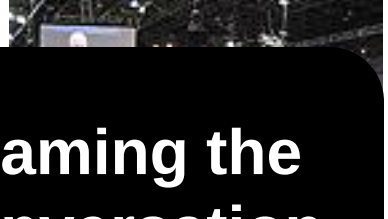
Educating + Building Awareness

Continuous

Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline



Framing the Conversation

Dialogue + Deliberation

Refining Shared Priorities

Sustaining Participation

Implementing Public Priorities

Educating + Building Awareness

Continuous

Large Scale

Public Engagement

Online | Offline

AMERICA *SPEAKS and* GLOBAL *VOICES*

Engaging citizens in governance.

www.americaspeaks.org

Questions?

Slide 2: This question is a useful opening to take stock of a personal and professional commitments to using dialogue to improve our lives and community. It was the basis of the original designing democracy conference for AmericaSpeaks in 1997. Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer started AS as a result of a nationwide examination of experiments to improve democracy.

Slide 4: Obama Administration has made a strong commitment to pursue open government. Agencies are developing plans and are one year out from doing this work. The second quote is from the memorial service for the victims of the Tucson shootings.

Slide 5: It is important to think through how one perceives the relationship between the government and the public. What is working, what is your framework, what is not working. How can it change to make it more productive?

Slide 6: Citizen engagement needs to move from a simplistic information exchange toward a more proactive engagement that works to ensure public concerns are considered consistently. Depending on the framework a stronger collaboration can more effectively create the kind of trust that government needs to function well for the long-term. Direct democracy is often considered the focus of empowerment but brings with it its own problems such as initiatives and referendums.

Slide 7: Talking Points

- Participants must reflect demographics of community in which meeting held
- Use Census data to guide outreach
- Diverse, representative participation gives decision-makers confidence in outcomes
- Gives citizens who weren't there confidence their views were "represented" by others like them
  - -One woman who didn't attend Listening to the City said, "Even though I wasn't there, I trusted that someone like me *was* in the room."
- Diversity always includes age, race/ethnic group, income level, gender
- Additional diversity requirements vary according to topic/decision; LTC representation of survivors/relatives of victims due to disproportionate impact
- High success rate in attracting diverse participation
  - Almost every community we have heard, "You'll never get [fill in the number] people…"
- Success due to unique community organizing methods – go beyond "usual suspects", look to include people who feel disenfranchised
  - -Distribute flyers at community job fairs, community events, coordinate with welfare-to-work and WIC programs, announcements in utility bills, work through trusted community leaders, etc.

Slide 8 Talking Points

- Participants must reflect demographics of community in which meeting held
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Slide 9: Our point of view is that the opportunities are tremendous and that the new technologies and methodologies only enhance the idea to create an institution that can really reflect the new modes of governance. But this must be done with attention to the principles of success that we have developed.

Slide 10: Issues such as health care, climate change, youth involvement, education – or almost any issue when it is ripe for a conversation with trade-offs and dilemmas.

Slide 11: Issues such as public works or environmental projects when one is just going through the motions and there isn't really a public decision to be made.

Slide 12: Innovative examples of unique insights: Sliding fee scale for small businesses in health care reform; wetlands and environmental protection for new orleans.

- Know people from key communities are represented; no need to do a second process
- Outcomes have greatest impact when participants represent community
- AS only works in situations where decision makers have pledged to consider input from meeting
- Citizens must feel that their contribution has a chance to impact outcome
- All key decision makers and leaders invited to meeting
- Decision maker participation must be visible but listen not speak
- Decision makers asked to participate in the full meeting & reflect back/respond to what they have heard at the end of the meeting
- Recommendations should link to specific decision-making process
- Meeting content must deal with issues that can genuinely be influenced; some decisions not open to influence
- AS works with sponsor to identify issues/content most appropriate for discussion
- Right question is critical to produce useful information
- If dialogue organized without outcomes in mind, info similar to special interests' info
- Instant results adds to intensifies impact of input; creates leverage
- Quick reporting allows for detailed, substantive media coverage
- Decision makers can respond immediately to input
- Extensive final report generated after several weeks
- Final report creates extensive summary for long-term impact

Slide 13: There has been extensive work done with all types of new approaches – constantly being improved. However, many have adopted and perfected their own model and each has strengths and weaknesses.
The work of AS can be done in both small group and large scale approaches. It depends on what the outcomes are that one is attempting to meet. Large scale approaches have the advantage of creating more momentum for change and greater validity if they are managed right. Small scale provide direct input and are less expensive.

Slide 14: AmericaSpeaks has spent quite a bit of time reviewing many of the on-line approaches and sees them as a key to increasing deliberation. They must however be managed to ensure that they meet the five principles of success and therefore promote a level of dialogue that enables more informed recommendations.

Slide 15:Talking Points

- Picture of our largest Town Meeting, Listening to the City
- We have learned it is hard to understand what we do without showing pictures of it
- Approximately 4,300 participants in July 2002
- Meeting addressed the rebuilding of the World Trade Center site
- How is this possible? How does this work?
- Presentation will describe key components of this process at any scale
- Elements same 100 to 4,000

Slide 18: Our goal is to match as much as possible the level of diversity in the region. When we don't meet the targets closely – we work to represent those voices in the room by listening more carefully to those that do represent those demographics.

Slide 19: Informed participation and excellent discussion guides are a hallmark of the work done by AS. We put extensive time into producing clear documents with a content committee and community readers and focus groups that make sure we can test the work before doing our large group meetings.

Slide 20: AS has recruited and trained thousands of facilitators across the U.S. that serve as a backbone for the work that we do. Most often facilitators are volunteers and serve to ensure that the discussions meet our ground rules of listening, staying on task, and developing consensus positions when needed.

Slide 22: Theming and key pad polling is a central aspect of all of our work. We want to make sure that the themes that are developed during the day are voted upon. Our theme team comprises experts who can read the data in an objective way and report out the data that clearly reflects the inputs from the tables.

Slide 23: The combination of theming and key pads makes sure that the input reflects the priorities of the day.

Slide 24:We strive to directly link our work to the key decision-makers. This linkage is critical to our success. We have many examples where our work has directly influenced the decisions from citizen summits and budgets, to WTC processes, and priorities for New Orleans. Decision-makers often want room to change priorities – but often take the decisions and direction provided to shape final legislation and decisions. Key leaders often present the opening and closing remarks to help acknowledge the need for the input and reflect upon recommendations.

Slide 25:The design process is critical to the success of our work. It takes leadership, excellent management skills, and an ability to shape a design that reflects the broader topics and issues to be discussed. It often is done under the pressure of tight timelines. But to have success – a clearly mapped out design and content process should be followed.

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Slide 26:The final testing and refinement stage often runs to the last day. When everything is put together, you often see needs and tweaks that will really improve the day.

Slide 27: CalSpeaks occurred in a critical phase in the negotiations of the health care reform bill in California. All parties needed objective information and public input on how to proceed.

Slide 30:We used satellite linkages in this to improve the quality of the video transmissions but it can be expensive. We've used other web-based processes that are quite adequate.

Slide 34: Evaluations were quite positive. The large data base of interested participants represented a great opportunity to keep people informed. Foundations did not spend much of their money on the follow up side.

Slide 39: This June 2010 event was one of the largest events we have done in terms of the number of sites that were included in the process. It shows how broadly an event can be done. It also was done at an important juncture in the debate of how to address the nation's fiscal challenges.

Slide 41: In very complex issues such as the budget and health care. We generally produce a background paper and then one that focuses on the options. People need to be given the same common understanding in order to proceed with reviewing options. Materials are both written and presented.

Slide 43: These questions are examples of how to construct a dialogue and to use the information to inform later table discussions.

Slide 44: In value discussions – it is often useful to try and heighten where there are disagreements in order to ensure that we respect different positions.

. **Slide 45**: We used a set of three scales to examine where participants stood on values – these were very important to understanding how to approach the options.

Slide 46: These were the table discussions questions after an initial set of recommendations. Tables had the option to change their initial recommendations.

Slide 55: It would be our goal to develop a sustainable process for citizen engagement that uses both on-line and face-to-face processes. Wouldn't it be powerful if there was a non-partisan, trusted entity that would have as its job to effectively solicit input that decision-makers would use to inform their views rather than or to complement traditional political processes?

Slide 56: AmericaSpeaks and its internation arm Global Voices are very interested in partnering with other organizations to promote new ways to engage citizens in governance decisions. We are happy to work closely with you in the design and implementation of projects.

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